

Message Text

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ACTION SP-02

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 0222

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, SY, IZ
SUBJECT: BRIEFING ON PRES. SADAT'S VISIT; IRAQ-SYRIAN EFFORTS TO
COORDINATE OPPOSITION TO SADAT PEACE INITIATIVE

REF STATE 031717

1. AMBASSADOR DREW ON PARAS 2 THROUGH 8 REFTTEL TO BRIEF ACTING
MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS YUSUF AL-ALAWI FEB 8. HIS RESPONSE
WAS THAT TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE BECAUSE OMANGOV IS CONVINCED
PRES. SADAT'S GOVERNMENT IN EGYPT IS GOING TO BE IN DEEP
TROUBLE UNLESS SADAT CAN SOON SHOW MORE EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
IN NEGOTIATIONS THAN IN PAST TWO MONTHS. SPECIFICALLY, HE SAID,
COMPLETION OF THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE GIVEN
HIGHEST PRIORITY.

2. AL-ALAWI THEN ASSERTED HIS FEAR THAT SYRIA AND IRAQ ARE COMING
CLOSER AND CLOSER TO EFFECTIVE AGREEMENT ON COUNTERING THE SADAT
PEACE INITIATIVE. RECALLING COMMENTS MADE TO TWO OMANI MINISTERS
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AND HIMSELF BY SADDAM HUSSEIN IN BAGHDAD DURING ROUTINE JAN 24-
26 VISIT OF OMANI DELEGATION, AL-ALAWI SAID HE SENSED
THAT THIS SYRIAN-IRAQI TOGETHERNESS WAS DUE TO PERSONAL
PARTICIPATION
OF PARTY LEADERS SUCH AS SADDAM HUSSEIN AND MICHEL AFLAQ, IN DIS-
CUSSIONS. HE THOUGHT IRAQ WAS MAKING PROGRESS IN URGING SYRIA TO

THROW UNSC RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 INTO THE ASHCAN ONCE AND FOR ALL. A FACTOR IN SYRIA'S THINKING, HE WENT ON, IS SARG DESIRE TO GET ITS TROOPS OUT OF LEBANON. IN TURN, IRAQ IS EAGER TO SEND "VOLUNTEERS" (UP TO 40,000 WAS HIS FIGURE) INTO LEBANON TO REPLACE THE WITHDRAWING SYRIANS. AL-ALAWI SEEMED TO VIEW THISSWEEK'S SYRIAN-LEBANESE CLASHES IN LEBANON AS SOME SORT OF PRELUDE TO A SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING HE HAD JUST HEARD THAT SARG PRESIDENT ASSAD IS TO GO TO MOSCOW IN A FEW DAYS, AND HE PRESUMED THIS WAS TO ASSURE HIMSELF OF SOLID RUSSIAN ARMS BACKING IN EVENT ALL PEACE EFFORTS COLLAPSED AND ARAB/ISRAEL SITUATION DEGENERATED TOWARDS ARMED CONFLICT.

3. COMMENT. SEEMS TO ME AL-ALAWI IS UNDERESTIMATING THE DEEP-SEATED PARTY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SYRIA AND IRAQ, BUT I REPORT HIS VIEWS OF IMPENDING SYRIAN-IRAQI RAPPROCHEMENT FOR WHAT THEY MAY BE WORTH, BECAUSE HE WAS UNUSUALLY DEMONSTRATIVE IN PROPOUNDING THEM, AND BECAUSE OF HIS RECENT PERSONAL CONTACT WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN.
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